Indian trading at Fort Edmonton "After 9 o'clock in the morning the Indians, a limited numbernat a time, wer admitted to the Indian room. This was reached through a narrow palisaded passage from the small gate in the stockade surrounding the fort. No liquor could at this time be bought for consumption on the premises, though those desiring it might purchase kegs to be carried away with them. The rule that these kegs must not be broached except in camp was never violated.

Besides liquor, their purchases in those days were limited almost entirely to ammunition, guns, tobacco and vermilion in small buckskin bags. The latter was often mixed with flour--one of paint to five of flour. The liquor, Jamaica rum, was first mixed in the ratio of one part rum and seven water. Ad the trade progressed it was diluted more and morenuntil little was left but the smell.

When they first appeared at the fort, the chiefs were met at the main gate by the officer in charge. As the handsof the head chief and the Hudson's Bay Company official joined, the flag of the old organization rose to the peak of the mast in the square and the cannon in one of the bastions boomed. This formal proceeding was repeated until each chief had been regularly received. There was but one cannon and a single flag, so that, as may be imagined, this entailed some delay.- The first chief having been duly recognized,the others in order of precedence were obliged to wait whi e the flag was lower d and the big gun recharged. Then they, too, were accorded in turn the honours of a formal reception.

The Company carried in stock in those days a quantity of military coats, adorned with gilt braid and buttons, of the period of Henry Vlll. A Henry Vlll coat cost a good horse. The chief's most soaring ambition was the possession of a complete uniform, which included the coat, and

an elaborately-embroidered, very long and low vest and red military trousers with gold stripes down the sides. The uniform was surmounted by a high beaver hat with an immense plume, a fox tail, in front. Decked out in this costume the chief was an exalted personage.

Once the trade began he was not likely to long retain his coveted garb intact. The trousers went first, next the vest and then the coat. Ultimately he would strut about wearing only his breechclout, the deference-compelling hat and his moccasins. The last thing parted with was certain to be the hat. Sometimes, in a moment of drunken absentmindedness, the breechclout slipped behind, and the haughty head of his clan paraded about the camp sans clothing save for the hat and the trailing breechclout.

At 9 a.m. sharp a rum trade came to an abrupt stop; no liquor was obtainable after that hour at any price.

Indians arriving to trade filed silently past the fort on the way to their camp-ground nearby. The lodges were pitched; then the chiefs, several sometimes simultaneously, came with their bands and were admitted to the Indian room. Each took up his position with his young men on a separate bench. No word was spoken until the interpreter had filled the long-stemmed pipe with tobacco and harouge, or red-willow bark.

The master, which in the case of a headquarter post like Edmonton meant the chief factor, had in the meantime entered. The interpreter having lit the pipe, it was passed to the head chief. Each chief had a different way of receiving it. He would rise, take the pipe, present it to the north, west, south and east; then to the sun ("Going to the sun"). These formalities having been observed, he took three long whiffs and passed it to the man next him on the left. The pipe then travelled on down the line, each man taking three puffs and no more.

If the pipe was not presented according to his own particular form a chief would not accept it. Piskun Munro, the halfbreed interpreter at

Fort Edmonton in those days, knew all the prescribed rites of the various chiefs; thus no mistakes were made and no trouble arose.

Before the speeches began each Indian was given a drink. The head chief then rose and made his talk, asking the master to pity and favour them, proclaiming that they had done their best and would try to do better in the future. The master followed, saying he was well pleased that they had striven to make good hunts and had no doubt, as they had said, that their next visit would prove even more satisfactory. The speeches ended, each Indian received another drink and they were turned out of the fort. All gates were closed. The trade, meaning the barter in rum, then began and night be kept up all night and until nine next morning, when it cased summarily.

A small blockhouse stood against the stockade in front. The trade was carried on through a wooden shutter some eighteen inches square set in the stockade inside the blockhouse. Through this the Indian handed in his robes, furs and other barterable effects and received his portion of weak Jamaica rum. Instead of a robe sometimes a bullet intended for the trader passed through the opening into the blockhouse. The redman celebrating was not usually an amiable individual. While a liquor trade was in progress the fort was closed tight; every door and gate in the stockade firmly locked and secured, and no Indian was admitted within the walls of the fort.

When the Indians crossed the Saskatchewan or any other river in those days they had to swim. The women usually crossed first; then the horses were driven in by the men, and it was the women's job to catch the animals as they reached the opposite shore. This did not always give them time to dress, and in puris naturabibus the horses were captured and then gowns were donned.